535 to the prescribed two or three, tiring themselves out to the plaudits of
527 those close by.

To the old-timers, however, the modern version of the traditional dance was a sad commentary on the state of things. They thought the young people too soft. After I had been watching the *horo* for some time an old man hobbled up to me. I had seen him shaking his head and muttering to himself, so I asked him, "What do you think of it, *dedo*?" He grunted, "It's all right for the young people to have a little fun, but they aren't as strong as I used to be when I was young. I used to hoe corn, harvest wheat, and come back to dance all evening. The young people can't do that now. And I wasn't as healthy as my father used to be."

535 The village registrar, Bai Angel, told me why there had been a declining interest in the *hora,* especially those which used to occur around the neighborhood fountains. About seven o'clock the people used to go to the pasture to get their animals. If the animals were slow in coming, then the people danced the *horo* there in the fields. When the animals had been taken home, and after the girls had finished up their housework, they went with jugs to one of the three fountains in the village and there danced again until eleven o'clock. In 1924 more fountains were installed in the village, thus tending to break up the larger groups which gathered around the three original fountains. The girls preferred to carry water from the fountains nearest their homes, and no longer attended the evening *horo.*

517 Tavern life was another, less colorful way of passing the bleak
● 521 winter days. In the four ill-ventilated *kruchmi* the men gathered to
275 discuss the harvest and to argue over the news read aloud from yester-
203 day's newspaper. Some man sought his godfather, or the godfather of a recently christened son or daughter, and invited him to have a drink of *rakiya* (plum brandy) or wine. Sometimes men who had completed a business deal drank to clinch it. Men who had been in the army together told the same tall tales of adventure over and over again, re-creating those experiences which lifted them for a while out of their limited village environment. There were seldom any fights, because the frequenters put an end to disagreements before they got

out of hand. The fact that not all patrons of the tavern drank liquor was shown by the comment of one of the villagers:

"I come to the tavern chiefly for the newspaper. I have a strong will, drink little, and know when to stop. The young men when starting the temperance association asked me to be president but I couldn't give up coming here for the newspaper. The small coffee house across the square has only room enough for five or six people and there's no point in going there. Many blame me for going to the tavern, but they have no interest in finding out what is going on in the world."

One advantage of visiting the tavern included the announcements that the town crier always made there as well as out in the square.

The tavern keepers, however, had no illusions about their standing in the public estimation. All of them were of the same peasant stock as their patrons, but had sold some of their land in order to set themselves up in business.

"If the people of the village took a vote, the majority would favor shutting up all the taverns. The people don't like us," was the tart comment of one tavern keeper. This dislike sprang from the indebtedness of so many people to the tavern keepers, as well as from the strong feeling many have toward the social consequences of excessive alcoholism.

There were, however, a number of men who had to miss the morning session at the Dragalevtsy *kruchmi*. They were the milkmen. Each morning while it was still dark eight tiny donkeys left their yards, pattered down the slope just outside the village, and followed the straight gravel road five miles to Sofia. They were accompanied by their prodding masters who kept an eye on the two or three large cans of milk which had been strapped onto the wooden saddles. These donkeys long ago learned to swallow any pride they might have had, for each morning, with monotonous regularity, they were overtaken by the high two-wheeled horse-drawn milk carts used by the remaining thirty Dragalevtsy milkmen. Once in Sofia, the majority of the milkmen covered their routes, knocking at the doors of the regular customers and waiting patiently for a container into which to pour a quart or so of milk from the large cans. The round completed, most of the milkmen began at once to retrace the long uphill journey from the city's outskirts to the village.

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With women it was quite different, since marriage for them called for major adjustments. Not only did the wife have to become accustomed to the demands and habits of her husband, but she also had to fit into the routine of her husband's parental home. In some cases she had to subordinate herself to other daughters-in-law in the household. Should she and her husband live in a separate dwelling near the husband's childhood homestead, she still was so subject to the scrutiny of the in-laws that she found it expedient to conform to their ways of doing things.

The woman, much more than the man, had to give up the companionship of her former friends to move in the group of the married women of the neighborhood. In these groups she was initiated into much of the folklore about anatomy, conception, childbirth, and child care. The frank discussion by various women of their personal experiences was enough to make any squeamish girl terrified at the very thought of becoming a mother. Continued discussion, however, made the experience eventually seem less of an ordeal; in fact, it was often a source of comfort and encouragement when her time arrived.

These neighborhood gossiping groups did much more than shock the girl into some of the realities of married life; they also informed her of the personal peculiarities of her in-laws and neighbors; they let her know what she should and should not do. And if she was one of the first of her circle of friends to marry, she could look forward to the day when one or two of them would become brides in the vicinity and could join her in the company of these older married women.

The role of these women's groups in the village was interesting and far more important than the surface informality would indicate. Recreation for the older women was generally tied up with work. Distinctions, however, should be made between the women's work groups, such as those for spinning and carding, and women's gossiping groups, in spite of the fact that the membership was the same in both groups and that gossiping was the chief recreation in both instances. In the work groups, the women were invited formally by the hostess, were fed, and were expected to stay most of the day, definitely to work. Gossiping groups, however, were much more informal, since people

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571 521 came together without an invitation. If it was a workday, a few women of the neighborhood gathered in one of the yards to spin, sew, or knit. If it was a holiday, they simply talked. The village women spoke of it as getting together "to laugh, to be merry." The women gathered in twos, threes, or more, almost entirely on a neighborhood basis. If relatives were in the neighborhood, they were included, but because they were neighbors, not relatives. Seldom did relatives from other sections of the village attend. Among some women it was the practice to go only when invited, however informally. As one woman said:

"We take our work along. If there is anything to eat, we eat. Age makes no difference. It is seldom that an unmarried girl participates in a group with married women, because the married women talk about things which a girl should not be permitted to hear. A girl would be allowed to stay with the women only if the discussion is not of a kind bad for her." She went on to add that the young and old people customarily did not mix in conversation. "The old have little to say which interests the young, so then they begin to give advice and the young people run away."

I met five women varying in age from thirty-three to sixty-six talking one Sunday on the street corner. Some of the women had taken off their shoes and were standing in the brook beside the road. This group had a decided neighborhood basis. When I asked how these five women happened to get together, this was the explanation:

"Slavina came to ask Geny about a sick neighbor across the street. Maria saw them talking and came over to hear what the news was. Stenna, who lives up the street, also came, and after her the other Maria."

They had been talking there for almost an hour before I came and were still talking an hour after I left, as I saw on my return to the College. Since it was Sunday they were doing no handwork, but said that often during the week they gathered to help one another spin, hoe corn, and harvest. One said to me, "We live together." Even in the wintertime they went around to visit, to inquire if the friends had enough wood to see them through the winter, if the cow was still sick, how much the taxes had been. Of all the women Geny

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did the most talking. The women found it difficult to say which one helped the others most, because "this depends so much upon one's special knowledge of cooking, caring for the sick, and sewing." Each woman was expert in a different line, but all were willing to help in any way.

The distinction between age groups broke down when the group was hard at work, as the work was then more important than the flow of gossip. In general, the gossiping groups got together more frequently in the summertime and on Sundays. Women found their chief recreation with women, and men with men, though the men said they needed the stimulation of tavern society.

This willingness of the men to spend money for recreation and to limit their wives to the questionable joys of gossip illustrated the common saying, "Bulgaria is a man's country." A Dragalevtsy peasant saw nothing strange in the sight of a man riding a donkey while his wife trudged along behind carrying their purchases home from market. Or if a man returned alone from market, having ridden all the way in his wagon, his wife, tired from a day in the field, went out to carry in his things, saying, "He's weary and needs my help." She was always careful to make no queries about the day's activities, although she might be bursting with curiosity to know what had happened at market. She went about her work and waited until he was comfortably fed and settled, knowing full well that then she would have a complete report. Usually her husband made himself out to be the hero of each little episode, but "men are like that," she would say.

The well trained wife always deferred to her husband. If ever I asked a question in the presence of both, the woman turned her eyes to see what response her husband made. If he made a gesture as though to say, "You go ahead and answer," then she began to talk, becoming silent whenever her husband wished to interject any comments.

What was even more conclusive proof that Bulgaria was a man's country, and certainly that Dragalevtsy was a man's village, was the obedience of women to their husband's command. I asked thirty wives in the course of my family interviews:

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574 476 wooden frame, through which the wool is drawn. The women in all parts of the room must be kept supplied with wool. Mealtimes must come at the prescribed intervals, and the good conversationalists must be urged to repeat some of the latest news, while those who consider themselves singers must be encouraged to start a song. And so the day passes. The women have arrived in the morning as soon as they completed their morning tasks, and they stay until midafternoon. At other times, however, a smaller group assembles in the evening for four or five hours of enjoyment and spinning.

● 521 Needless to say, these *sedenka* groups[1] are powerful agencies in the dissemination of news and in the formation of village opinion. After a day spent in one of these sessions a woman has a supply of "small talk" sufficient to last her for two or three days in conversations with those who did not attend this particular gathering.

000 GOOD EXTENSION PRINCIPLES AND THE SEDENKA. The specialist who uses a *sedenka,* whether especially arranged for her or not, would be following good educational and sociological practice.

1. *She would be bringing people together in a familiar environment:* that is, one of the village homes. There would not be the strangeness of the schoolroom nor the distractions of completely new surroundings. Instead of having to adjust to a new place and a new person (the speaker) the women would play the role of hostesses and expect the speaker to adjust to them.

2. *The people would already be accustomed to meeting with each other.* Any newly-formed group needs an exploratory period in which the bolder individuals try various things on the group to see what meets with favor and what with stony indifference or frank disapproval. In a *sedenka* group, people already know how their remarks and their questions will be received, which is a matter of much importance in a learning situation. Among people who do not know each other well an ill-advised laugh at a sincere question can kill the chances of a lively, helpful, wholehearted discussion. The congeniality of the group is further assured by the fact that the hostess is able to use a selective technique which weeds out the incompatibles. Fortunately, these "incompatibles" are usually compatible in other groups where they have much in common with their associates in these groups. Therefore, every village woman could be reached in some *sedenka* grouping.

3. *The demonstration agent could use the artifacts of the village home to good advantage.* As far as possible the demonstration should be built around what the women already have, for that is what they must use if they follow the speaker's suggestions. The average village home would not spend more than four or five dollars a year on furnishings, utensils, and the like, nor could one expect them to spend more than this out of the meager budget

[1 [cf pp 74-77, p. 261, category 116 -- Analyst]